The Wick House
Jockey Hollow
Morristown, Morris County, New Jersey

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PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA
District of New Jersey

Historic American Buildings Survey
Seymour Williams, A.I.A., District Officer
133 Central Avenue, Rahway, New Jersey

The Wick House
Jockey Hollow
Morristown, Morris County, New Jersey

Owner: National Park Service

Date of Erection: 1746-'48 (

Architect:

Builder: Henry Wick

Present Condition: Excellent

Number of Stories: One and one-half

Materials of Construction: Foundation - stone

Exterior walls - frame construction

Interior walls - wood construction

Inside brick chimneys

Roof - pitch, wood shingles

Historical Data:

The Wick House stands upon the Wick tract which was purchased originally in 1746. The present house was probably erected in 1747. The encampment of the Continental Army in the winter of 1779-1780 was on the Wick and Kimbel Farms about four miles southwest of Morristown.

This house was sometimes referred to as Wick Hall which is probably explained by the fact that most of the dwelling houses in Morris County of the Revolutionary period were constructed of logs; this house was of frame construction and was unusually large for pioneer days.

There is very little known as to the activity in the Wick House during the Revolution. It is understood, however, that Major Joseph Bloomfield was quartered there during the winter of 1776-1777. It is also known that Major-General Arthur St. Clair had his headquarters there.

Captain Henry Wick the owner of the house served with a company of Morris County calvary which did good service during the war. However, this company was used largely as a guard for Governor Livingston and the Privy Council.

With the house is also associated the story of Tempe Wick. The Pennsylvania troops under General Wayne mutinied in January, 1781. Mrs. Wick, according to one story told about this episode, was sick and Temperance Wick, familiarily called Tempe, went to Dr. Leddell who was her brother-in-law. As she mounted her horse when returning, several American soldiers stopped her and ordered her to dismount declaring that they had use for the horse. Through a ruse Tempe escaped and rode home. When she arrived, she led the horse into the big kitchen, through the parlor, and into the spare bedroom in the northwest corner of the house. She closed the shutters of the only window in the room. According to the story, she placed the feather bed on the floor so that the stamping of the horse would be less likely to be heard. The soldiers searched the barn and woods for the horse, but left

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without it. According to one version of the story, the horse was kept in the bed chamber for three weeks; another version says three days. There are no actual records to prove that this story is true, but it seems to have the basis of the fact.

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Report on the Restoration of the Wick House
Morristown, New Jersey

By
Thomas T. Waterman
Associate Architect

In New Jersey are found early buildings in the style of several neighboring regions. In the northeastern area the Dutch architectural influence was dominant, in the central area that of New England, and in the west that of Pennsylvania. It is difficult to establish hard and fast lines for the area of each influence as the settlers of various origins intermingled. At Morristown this is very evident; the Wick house is purely Connecticut Long Island in antecedents, the Guerin purely Dutch Hudson Valley and Washington's Headquarters (The Ford House) is a blending of the two.

The Wick house was built about 1750 by Henry Wick, an emigrant from Bridgehampton, L. I. About 1745 an emigration of Long Islanders to New Jersey accounted for the moving here of the younger Wick family. The area opened up by the new settlers was a fine farming country with a supply of virgin timber and considerable deposits of iron. Wood was the usual building material in Morris County in the earlier days, but in the counties to the north and east stone was widely used and in the lower Delaware River counties brick was almost typical.

The Wick house is the development of the New England house type called the integral leanto. The type is especially interesting as showing the whole evolution of the New England house from its original one-room form. The earliest plan, exemplified by the Waite-Potter house at South Westport, Massachusetts, was a simple rectangle with a chimney built almost across the whole end of the room. However, in this type between the chimney and the front wall was a space about six by eight feet. Partitioned off from the room, this was utilized as the entry and had a steep stair or ladder to the loft or attic. When the requirements of a growing family necessitated more space another, usually equal room was added at the other side of the chimney. This produced the central chimney New England house. As time went on the typical house was built two full stories high, with the same plan upstairs and down. The requirements for further space resulted in the building of a low addition across the back, containing a kitchen in the center with small bedrooms at either end. The addition covered by a leanto roof produced the familiar "salt box" house with a long sloping rear roof. While often houses came to this state by additions they were frequently so built at one time. As the final development of the central chimney type house the leanto addition was made two full stories high and the whole building was covered by a

symmetrical gable roof. Since the Wick house is but one story and an attic in height, it does not fully exemplify this latter phase, but its plan and frame associate it with this type rather than with the earlier forms, in that the leanto form is recalled in the framing and the roof is a simple gable.

In early building the principal members of the frame of the building were the corner posts, the sill on which they stood, and the plates and girts which they supported. In the front and rear walls were extra posts that supported the timbers, called the chimney girts, that framed around the chimney. In the leanto house these occurred in the inside, or chimney wall, of the kitchen, and an extra set of posts were placed in the outer wall to take the roof framing. In the Wick house all of these members can be seen, but the heavy summer beam and small joists, familiar in earlier New England ceilings have given way to a system of equal timbers traversing the ceiling. This is the system the Dutch always used, though in their building each beam was supported by a separate pair of posts, as in the kitchen of Washington's Headquarters in Morristown and in the Guerin house. The use of equal traverse timbers may be due to Dutch influence, but if so through Connecticut or Long Island, because this system is met with in both places.

In all respects the Wick house can be considered a Long Island house transplanted to New Jersey. The one story and attic integral leanto type was the usual type there and many examples remain, including the "Second House"[1] and the Sayre house at Southampton.[2] The three openings across the front and the shingled south wall are frequently met with.

State of House in 1933.--Prior to its restoration the Wick house presented the appearance of a commonplace story and a half Cape Cod cottage. It was covered with narrow white painted clapboards and the shutters were the traditional dark green. The facade had two 15 light windows on each side of a modern center door, which was sheltered by a flimsy recent porch. The roof was covered with thin machine sawed shingles, and from the center projected a small central chimney. The side elevations were identical, having two 15 light (off center) windows on the first floor, two 12 light (centered) windows on the second floor, and a 6 light window in the apex of the east gable which was lacking in the west gable. The rear elevation had a small four-light window at the east end, then (spaced to the west) a sheathed door, a pair of 15 light windows, and at the west end of the elevation a similar size opening with 12 light sash.

1. Landmarks of the Montaulk Highway, E. L. Armbruster, Brooklyn, 1925, p. 35.

2. Long Island's Domestic Architecture, etc., Huntington Historical Society, 1920, p. 2.

There were few exterior details of interest; all of the window frames were new, and only six old sashes remained. These, however, were of great value, as they were undoubtedly of the date of the traditional construction of the house, c. 1750. They had largely old 7 by 9 inch lights and 1-1/8 inch wide muntins. Two of the sash were three lights wide and three lights high and two were three lights wide and two lights high. An important detail of this sash was that the lower edge of the upper sash found in the west kitchen chamber was beveled to fit the sill. This showed that the large sash had originally been the lower, rather than the upper, as the windows on the front and west sides were arranged before the restoration. Those on the east and rear had the small sash at the top as originally planned. The other old sash were found in the following openings; one in the top of the east kitchen chamber window, one in the top of the east kitchen window and two in the west.

None of the exterior trim whatsoever proved to be old, but almost all of the sheathed shutters were, if not original, at least very old. They were made of one wide board, kept from warping by three horizontal cleats, one in the center and one three inches from the top and one three inches from the bottom. The cleats 2⅝ inches wide were beveled on the edges and driven into mortises in the board so that the surface was substantially flush except for two small half round beads run on the upper and lower edges. Some of these shutters had the original hinges and hooks.

The interior of the house was particularly uninteresting. It was plastered throughout, with no early finish showing. The oldest trim remaining visible was that of the west window in the west kitchen chamber. This was very simple with a quarter round bead at the sash rebate and a backband formed of the same moulding. Both of these mouldings were evidently run from a muntin moulding plane, the character of which was later than the building by perhaps fifty years.

No old doors remained except the rear exterior door. All of the other doors were sheathed and battened of 19th century construction and were formed of narrow boards with 1/4 inch beads run on their edges. The battens were of varying widths and their edges were beveled. The doors were hung on built up frames, had plain flush trim and cast iron hinges and latches. There were no mantels in any of the rooms as all fireplaces had been eliminated except that in the kitchen. Here there was a built-in oven at the right of the fireplace with a painted brick facing around the two. The shelf was merely a board supported on iron brackets. The oven of domical form was very deep and was closed by a cast-iron door dated 1848.

The stair ascended to the attic in the southeast corner of the kitchen. In the closet under the stair it could be seen that the

east wall of the kitchen was sheathed behind the stair and that the finish and construction of the stair were modern.

The front entry had a closet at the north end partitioned off with modern boards. The attic was partitioned off at either end, at the east end being a long narrow room, running north and south, and at the west a wider room of the same length parallel with the building. All of these partitions were modern and of makeshift construction. There was a stone cellar under the eastern part of the house, the rest being unexcavated.

Examination of the Fabric, 1934.--On the completion of measuring and recording the Wick house in its unrestored state, it was stripped of modern materials. This entailed the removal of all of the clapboards and exterior trim. The frame was thus entirely exposed, and was measured and photographed. The framing of the front or south wall showed that the fenestration and type of wall covering had been changed from the original.

The central door had not been changed in position but had been heightened. The old gains for the head piece showed the original height of the door in the jamb studs that went from sill to plate. Flanking these and 1 foot 10 inches away were the posts carrying the chimney girts. These were complete with their braces, which occurred only on the sides away from the center. The west brace had been cut back at its intersection with the plate to allow for the insertion of a window and the east one was nicked for the same purpose. Similar braces occurred at the end posts, that at the east end being also nicked. The evidence of the cut braces pointed definitely to a change in fenestration and further examination made the original arrangement clear. It also showed that all studs in the central area between the extreme projection of the braces had been changed. Fortunately all of the original studs had not been destroyed, but some had been reused in new positions. The old gains cut in the plate showed their former position and further showed that originally there was only one window in the south wall on either side of the door instead of two. The eastern section showed studs in their original position from the underside of the brace to the sill, and one other old stud reused at the right of the left-hand window. It was found that this was an original window jamb stud (with gains for head and sill pieces) reused inverted. Its original position was indicated by a gain a few inches to the left. The companion jamb stud was missing. This is the case in the western section as well. The original stud was also reused inverted at the left of the right-hand window. Unfortunately no original window frames remained anywhere in the building.

All of the studs, posts and braces across the front were found to be notched out to receive battens, some of which were still in

place. The presence of these battens showed that this wall of the house was shingled at an early date, and probably originally. The spacing of the battens showed that the exposure of the shingles was about fifteen inches. The use of this type of wall covering is probably of Dutch origin. The material is widely used in areas of Dutch colonization or influence, such as extreme southwestern Connecticut, Long Island and the Hudson River area. The church at Springfield, N. J., has such shingles, nailed at the butts. Frequently on Long Island, houses with shingled front and clapboarded side walls will be seen, as at the Wick house, where only the front was battened to receive shingles.

The original fenestration of the side elevations was also clearly revealed by the framing. In both walls the southerly window was in its original location in plan, but had been lowered several inches, as shown by gains for head and sill in the jamb posts, all in their original positions. The northerly windows had in both cases been enlarged and on the east wall both jamb studs had been removed. Fortunately in the west wall both jamb studs for the windows were in place, though the center section of the northerly stud had been cut away to allow for the enlargement of the window. In this way the gains for head and sill pieces were lost but they remained in the southerly jamb stud. These and the spacing of the two studs gave the height and width of the windows. Corresponding gains in the end girt of the east elevation indicated that the two windows were identical in size and location.

The framing of the north wall was equally explicit in locating the original openings. The kitchen door was unchanged in location or size. The door frame was modern but the door, if not actually original, was at least very old. The little square window at the easterly end was shown by gains in the jamb studs to have been in the same location as the original. The existing sash was higher at the head, but the line of the top of the old sash also was shown by the gains. The exact width was determined by the original opening cut in the interior sheathing which still remained. The jamb studs of a corresponding square window at the westerly side of the elevation indicated a similar window in this location. Of the two central windows the framing proved that that to the right had not existed originally, but that at the left was unchanged in location. The jamb studs for the latter remained, with both head and jamb piece gains preserved. The right-hand window had been cut through a diagonal brace, and no old jamb studs or gains for the same in plate or sill remained.

The east and west gable walls showed changes in fenestration from two to a single large opening in the lower part of the attic and a small opening under the apex of the roof. The jamb studs for the small windows remained with the head and sill piece gains cut in

them. Only one jamb stud for each of the lower attic windows remained, but the location for the other was indicated and so the locations of the windows were determined.

An examination of the roof framing showed that no changes had been made in it, but the fact that the aperture framed for the chimney was so much greater than the shaft suggested that the chimney had once been larger. In studying the chimney this was also the conclusion reached.

With the stripping off of the weatherboards the inside covering of the rooms could be seen from the outside. In most cases this was plaster on wood lath, except in the rear rooms where sheathing could be seen. The plaster finish could be divided into three periods indicated by lath that was hand split, old sawed and new sawed.[1] The various periods seem to have no architectural importance so will not be discussed here. All plaster on sawed lath was removed, but this revealed nothing of importance. The ceilings were then examined from the attic by taking up the floor boards. It was found that the lath employed was largely hand split seemingly indicating an early period, but it was observed that the ceiling beams tne soffits of the floor boards were very sooty and in the kitchen that both had once been whitewashed. This was reliable evidence that the ceiling timbers had once been exposed in the rooms below. Therefore all ceiling plaster on hand-split lath and all remaining wall plaster was removed. That the ceilings had all originally been exposed was made certain by their appearance when stripped.

Sheathing was found on several interior partitions behind the plaster. Up to this time only certain areas of interior sheathing on outside walls was known to have existed. The sheathing was found on the south wall of the entry, on all walls of the kitchen, on the south and east walls of the West Kitchen Chamber, the north, south, and west walls of the East Kitchen Chamber and on walls and the ceilings of the Pantry. No old sheathing was found in the two front rooms.

In the front entry sheathing was found against the front wall, between the posts bearing the chimney girts and the door jamb studs. Whitewash was adhering to this sheathing showing that it formerly had been exposed, as was the case with the ceiling timbers. The south wall was the only old wall of the Entry remaining, all the inside partitions being new. That to the east of the door had been moved west to enlarge the east room and the original line of the partition could be seen against the post. The west partition had not been moved, as shown on the marks on the post, but it had been reconstructed as a stud and plaster partition with new material. When the

1. The various areas of each type are indicated on sheet #2 of the Wick House Framework drawing No. MOR-1035.

chimney was rebuilt, presumably in 1848, or shortly after (the date on the oven door), all of the original finish in the north part of the Entry, including the star was removed. The line of the ascent of the stair was shown in the ceiling framing.

The Restoration of 1934.--The exterior restoration of the Wick house was guided by explicit evidence except in the case of the actual surface treatment of the entrance door. The shingles of the front were hand cleft by CCC workers to the size as shown by the cleats. They were applied with hand wrought nails to the old cleats where they remained, or to the new cleats set in the old gains where they were missing.

The absence of cleats on the side and rear walls made it clear that these walls had been weatherboarded, though no old weatherboards remained in place. A piece of an old one, in oak, was found derelict in the building and was used as a model for the new material.

The window frames, made of solid members in conformance with old practice, were set into the old head and sill gains in the jamb studs. This was true throughout the building, the character of each window being shown in the framing. The old sash remaining was reused and followed exactly in detail for the new sash throughout the building. The old shutters were reused, except where one or two new ones were needed and these latter were copies of the old. The new ones, in common with all new wood used anyshere in the building were stamped with the date.

The sash and shutters of the building were painted with iron-oxide paint, in accordance with old practice, and with old paint found on them. Often such paint was used as a priming coat with another color on top. It seemed that here, in what might be called a pioneer house, the least expensive and most durable paint would be used, which would be iron oxide. The walls were not painted as they were usually left unpainted until after 1800. The barns are probably 19th century and were therefore painted.

In considering the restoration of the interior of the house, the two front rooms can be discussed together, as their condition was similar. There was no evidence of the original use of plaster in any of the rear rooms and as it was sure that the rough ceiling beams had been exposed in these rooms, it seemed unlikely that the walls were originally plastered. It was therefore determined to follow the wall treatment of the rear rooms, sheathing the walls horizontally on the outside walls and constructing the partitions of vertical boards. In locating the doors in the rooms, the entry doors were fixed by the plan of the entry itself. The north doors were left in the same location as found; this was presumably original as shown by the old sheathing on the other side of the partition. This arrangement of a pair of doors in the north wall, one leading to the kitchen and one

to the chamber was characteristic in this building type. The Payne house in Easthampton, L. I., has similar pairs of doors as do most of the houses of the type.

The exact size and location of the fireplaces was not obtainable but there could not be much variation from the restored condition due to the fact that the location and size of the chimney was well determined by the foundation and framing. The fireplaces have only a very simple trim, with no mantel shelf, as was characteristic in the period. Above the fireplace paneling was used as at the Ward Heightman house in New Haven and the Swett-Ilsley house, Newbury, Massachusetts. This is a characteristic practice in work after about 1700. Before this time paneling was almost unknown in the colonies. Its place was taken by sheathing which was of the type known as tongue and groove, the surface of the joints being concealed by a broad shallow moulding. By 1700 this type of construction gave place to a new form, like that in the Wick house. In this one board is beveled on the edge and the other is beaded and rebated, a form used alike in paneling and sheathing. Therefore, if vertical sheathing had been used over the mantel the lower edges of the boards would have had to be supported on a cleat, which, when beaded and rebated to take the board, and the board beveled to be received in the rebate, a panel form would automatically be produced.

The woodwork in these front rooms is painted with one coat of iron-oxide paint. In very early times when paint was not available wood finish was often stained with beet juice, but later paints made from ferriferous soil were used instead.

The window trim throughout the house follows that of the fireplace of the front rooms and is conjectural. It is precedented by that in the Payne house at Easthampton. The window trim in the west kitchen chamber was removed since it was considered to have been a substitution of about 1800.

No work was necessary in the two kitchen chambers or the pantry except the cleaning off of later coverings from the sheathing and repairing it and installing new sash, frames, and trim. In the east kitchen chamber the east wall had lost its sheathing and this had to be replaced here as well as on the north and west walls of the west kitchen chamber. In the kitchen the modern stair was removed, showing the old sheathing. When the stair was installed about 1850 it covered the old door to the front room, therefore a new door had been cut further west. In this way the old sheathing in this latter area was lost, and in the rebuilding of the chimney the overmantel as well. These areas were replaced during the restoration in accordance with the course pursued in the front rooms. For the new finish throughout, poplar, the wood of the original, was used. A supply of exceptionally wide boards thirty years old was found and acquired for the work.

The old stair was evidently destroyed in the alterations of c. 1848, but the header of the well partly remained and showed the original location. There was no information as to the actual stair detail, so it was rebuilt as simply as possible, of old material, all dated 1934. The location determined the north partition of the entry, as well as the position of the door at the foot of the stair. The use of a steep staircase within sheathing is unusual and was due to the absence of a second floor and the primitive character of the building construction. In the Long Island prototypes an open stair with turned balusters winds up against the chimney. The lack of precedent prevents the authenticating of the entry closet, but its location seems reasonable. The two grouped doors follow the grouping of those in the two front rooms. The sheathed finish on the three inside walls is in accordance with that in the rear rooms. The doors, however, are conjectural as no old interior doors survived. Where doors occurred in sheathed walls in early work they were sometimes paneled and sometimes sheathed. In the latter case the moulded joints of the sheathing were duplicated in the doors. Types of doors in sheathing occur in the Payne house in Easthampton, L. I.[1]

As the then existing modern doors in the Wick house were sheathed and battened it was felt that they perhaps replaced doors of the same type rather than paneled doors. Therefore the former were used throughout in the restoration. They are hung on jamb studs that extend from the floor to the ceiling timbers. At the proper level a head piece is mortised into the jamb studs. This is a practise often met with in both Dutch and English colonial building. An example of the former is in the Mabie house at Rotterdam, N. Y., and of the latter at the Whipple-Matthews house, at Hamilton, Massachusetts. The front door of the Wick house is hung in a similar way and though the head piece was missing, its location was evident. The restored exterior door itself is a usual variety for dwellings of this character. It is built of two thicknesses of sheathing, that on the exterior set vertically to shed the rain, and that on the inside set horizontally, functioning as a series of battens. The two thicknesses are fixed together by wrought iron spikes driven from the outside and clenched on the inside. These spikes are arranged to form a pattern of diagonal intersecting lines, as was often the custom, and as was directed in Bettsworth's "Builders Dictionary," published in London in 1732. The practice of decorating doors in this way was usual throughout the pre-Revolutionary period.

The most unfortunate change that had been made in the building was the replacing of the original chimney with another about the middle of the 19th century. Aside from the universal use of fireplaces in early rooms, it was known from the smoked ceilings of the front rooms that they once had fireplaces. In its state in 1933,

1. (See HABS NY-547, Sheet No. 2).

however, there were no fireplaces in either of the front rooms, this space being occupied by a deep oven in the kitchen. This condition led to the belief that the chimney had been rebuilt, and the date, 1848, on the oven door suggested the period of the change. A careful examination of the brickwork was made which showed that a great many bricks had been reused from an older structure. The base of the chimney was examined by excavation and it was determined that there was no evidence to show that the north, west, or south lines of the base had even been changed. On the east, however, the foundation evidently continued over to the line of the cellar wall. This would have made it coincide with the line of the old west partition of the southeast room as shown on the post in the front wall. The framing of the ceiling and roof confirmed the size as shown by the foundation.

With this evidence it was determined to rebuild the chimney which was done in exact accordance with the information uncovered and with the precedent of early houses of the type. The old brick was used supplemented by brick from ruins of the 19th century Thompson house, in the park. The area allowed by the foundation was not very great, but two small fireplaces were obtained for the front rooms and a large but shallow one for the kitchen as well as an oven in the center opening from the rear of the kitchen fireplace. This was the usual arrangement of this building type, and the dimensions, which were considered scanty were found to be usual in early work in Connecticut and Long Island. The form of the fireplaces was determined by the space and utility, as they would have been in the early days. The curved jambs of the kitchen fireplace were used to allow them to fit with those of the front rooms, and was a usage widely precedented in New England work, as in the Province house in Boston. This is true also of the location of the oven in the rear wall. These ovens were heated by filling them with hot coals, and then raking the coals out into the fireplace when the oven was heated. When the oven opened into the room an ash chute had to be built at the side into the fireplace, but when it opened into the fireplace it was not necessary. The domical form of the oven is characteristic.

The original flooring in the house had largely been replaced by modern. The southeast room floor was very poor and was replaced in the restoration with an old pine floor from a house at 239 Mt. Kemble Avenue and that of the southwest room was replaced by one from 232 Mt. Kemble Avenue. In the latter room portions of an old oak floor were still in place, but very little was left and matching flooring could not be found. The small area of old material left was moved to the entry and relaid.

The kitchen floor was modern under linoleum and the room was entirely relaid with an antique oak floor from 232 Mt. Kemble Avenue.

Most of the old floor remained in the west kitchen chamber except under the north window. This latter area was laid with old flooring to match and the old floor repaired. The missing boards are said to have borne the hoof prints of the horse Tempe Wick is said to have concealed in this room during the Revolution, and were removed as souvenirs. In both the pantry and the east kitchen chamber, the floors were relaid with old oak flooring from 232 Mt. Kemble Avenue, as no old flooring remained in either room.

The cellar was intact, but the stone walls were in bad condition, the west having to be largely rebuilt. In the excavations parts of the cellar steps were found which located the bulkhead and showed a patched area in the east wall where the door had been. In the south wall fragments of the old window grille were found which gave the size and spacing of the vertical bars.

It is fortunate that the Wick house has survived to give us an accurate picture of the dwellings that were built by the New Jersey pioneers of English antecedents. The fact that it was built by a Long Islander, whose New England origin caused him to build in the latter style, modified by the conditions that prevailed on eastern Long Island, makes the house even more interesting. There are others of the general type in the vicinity, but no other has retained its setting so unchanged, or shows more reliably the dwelling of mid-Jersey of two hundred years ago.